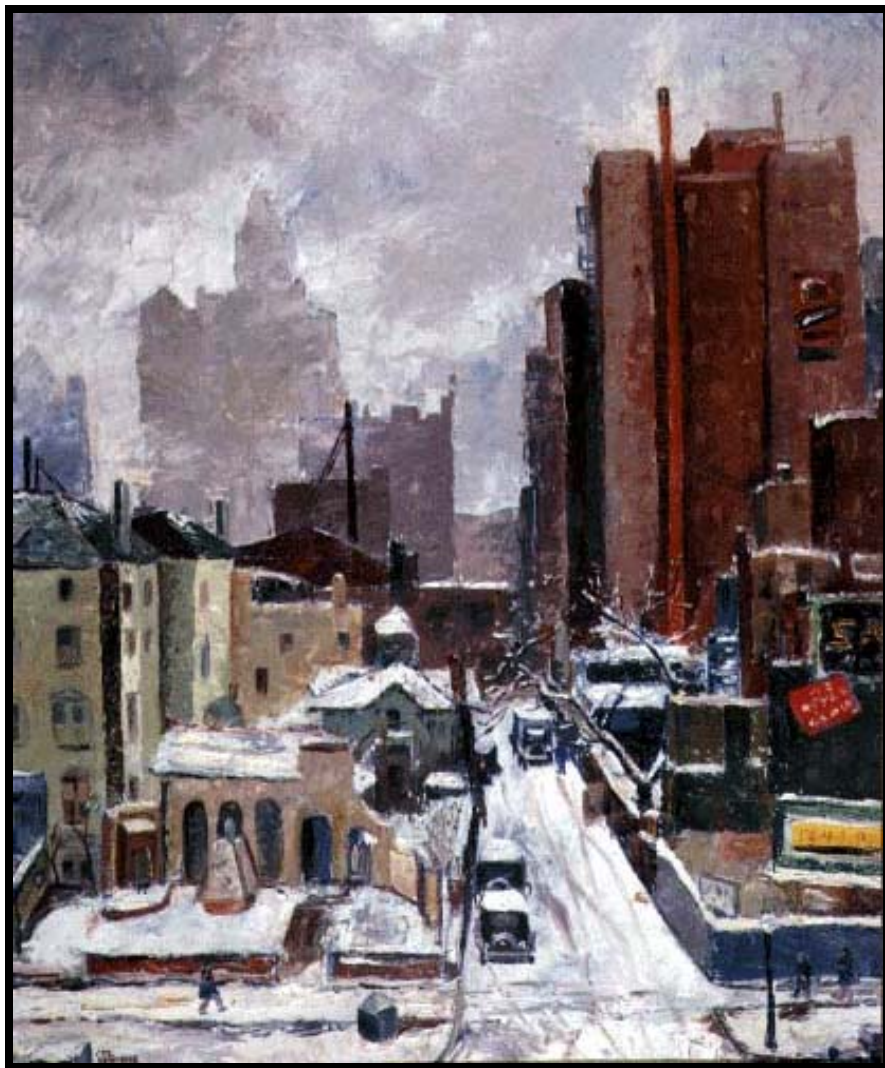


Cloud Boulevard

# *Cloud Boulevard*

## *A Collection of Poems*

*By Doug Tanoury*



FUNKY DOG PUBLISHING



Cloud Boulevard

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DETROIT, MICHIGAN USA



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# Cloud Boulevard

## Alter Road

In summer children play in the front yards  
With hair disheveled and dirty faces  
Amid wooden frame homes  
Ill kempt and needing repair  
That line the street and sit wedged  
Side by side and close to the road

Looking neither right nor left  
In silence I pass them  
The children continue to play as if I were invisible  
Like a visitor from a nether world or some ghost  
From the hereafter who has come down their street  
Just to say hi how are ya

But my mouth cannot bear the banality  
Of such an average greeting to interrupt their play  
For they are to me the poorly dressed reminders  
Of a past troublesome and grim  
Of days when childhood rested on me  
Like an affliction both serious and dire

On this dark street like a Dickens novel  
If I stop to talk to one child  
I would be addressing my own pain  
On a street crowded with regrets  
Where problems pile up on the curb  
Like the belongings of evicted tenants

# Cloud Boulevard

## Intersection

On the corner of S. Main and W. Fourth Street  
In a morning without sunlight  
I survey a street lined with low  
Brick storefronts and  
Locust trees with thin green foliage hanging  
Over wide sidewalks largely empty

And I have come here again  
To this intersection  
That I have studied in various lights  
At an assortment of times  
In each season  
The crossroads of my life  
That diverge like a path that Frost might write  
And I have pondered here  
Often and long

In snow and rain  
Light and darkness  
In the weak stained light sunrise  
And in scarlet tints of twilight  
And if I could write each  
Lazy Sunday morning and invest  
The fruit of each idle hour  
Of silent contemplation

I would place my palms on each  
Temple of the reader's head  
And gently guide their scope  
Of vision to two roads that intersect  
And diverge beyond in four directions

And stretch off into suburban cityscapes  
That I have traveled over and again  
Like some reoccurring dream that plays  
In endless repetition through  
A series of one-way streets and cul de sacs  
That seem to forever deposit me  
On the corner of S. Main and W. Fourth Street

# Cloud Boulevard

## And I Am

And I told her  
Matter of factly  
That indeed I am  
A poet of naked breasts  
And that umber nipples  
Centered in amber aureoles  
To me are pupils  
And Irises that serve  
As windows to the soul

And I went on to say  
Confident and self-assured  
That I am too the bard  
Of the bare thigh  
That to me is nature revealed  
Tan like the underside  
Of sycamore leaves in fall  
Softly wild and untouchable  
As a sleeping doe

And I concluded by saying  
That I am a lyric that can versify  
The plump lushness of  
A pale ass  
In still-life form  
Like so much fruit  
As if it were a honeydew melon  
Sliced in two and resting  
On the kitchen table

# Cloud Boulevard

## Arabesque

1.

Each December night is a large block of black ice  
That never quite seems to give up its grip  
But lingers lazily, most persistently,  
And imparts across the day  
A dimness that never graduates beyond  
The softness of a violet glow.

2.

I am daydreaming at the bus stop  
Awaiting the arrival of a coach  
That is running typically late.  
Its arrival at the curb is announced by the squeal of brakes  
And the hisses of hydraulics that swing open the door.  
I awaken to climb the steps.

3.

I hear the low rumble of steam whistle  
As a lake freighter negotiates a course  
Through a narrow channel, and few seconds later,  
There is a reply signal  
Booming through the summer morning  
A declarative always follows the interrogative.

4.

I am a shadow  
Who inhabits the small dark places of a world  
And moves through graphite days  
And charcoal nights  
Performing shadow tasks and going  
About my shadow business.

5.

Change clangs into the coin box  
And the rpms grow loud in the diesel  
While someone seated in the back  
Coughs loudly. I sway to the jolts and  
Bounces as the driver pulls away  
And into traffic heading downtown.

## Cloud Boulevard

6.

Across Macarthur Bridge  
There are green trees and grass  
And the rising arches that span the river  
Graceful they hover  
Weightless between  
The green water and blue sky.

7.

I watch for Harmonie Park,  
A few trees and benches wedged between  
The low gray buildings, and when I see it  
I pull the red wire in the coach twice  
To signal my stop and stand to  
Make my way to the door.

8.

I hear the call of gulls  
That fly stationary in the wind  
And skim the waves with white wings.  
I remember the smell of the river  
And the sound of the water  
On the rocks along the shore.

9.

Winter trees are frozen still  
In iced moonlight  
And I wonder if asleep as they are  
They somehow dream of sunlight  
On an afternoon in June'  
And the touch of wind in the fullness of August foliage.



# Cloud Boulevard

Co. Rd. 36A

Along a stretch of rural highway  
The land rises and gently rolls.  
Sheep graze on sepia hillsides,  
Gathered together in dingy gray herds  
Like clouds in overcast skies.

My thoughts beat me home, and  
I hear wind chimes  
Hanging from the front porch awning,  
The voices mixed with in laughter  
In the kitchen.

Corn stalks left standing in December  
Spreads across fields like honey,  
Where neglected barns lean  
Precariously toward sunset, and  
Dome-less silos rise into dark skies.

I feel the doorknob in my hand,  
Where every journey begins and ends,  
Far from a sienna and umber landscape,  
And desolation of a December afternoon  
Along an Indiana highway.

# Cloud Boulevard

## A Slow Season

In am stuck  
In the middle of this is a reluctant season  
Within its heart of slowness  
Its self-centered sloth  
In a holding back in bashful reserve  
Where the sun never shines  
And the clouds hide a shy blue sky  
Over trees sleeping so soundly  
In self-conscious reserve  
They do not dream of buds  
Indeed this season  
I am caught in  
Is the triumph of timidity

And I too celebrate it  
In my holding back for my touch now  
Is uncertain reserve and I am paused  
In tentative indecision for a moment  
An hour  
A day  
A collection of days  
Until there is nothing left to touch  
But the starkness and realization  
Of all that is missing

# Cloud Boulevard

## Nativity Church

### *Addolorato*

There is a Romanesque basilica  
With a tall bell tower that rises  
Above a neighborhood on  
The near east side  
It stands stately high above  
The squalor and poverty below  
Topped with bronze dome  
And ornamental urns

Solid and stately and strong  
I remember looking up at it often  
As a child like some talisman  
It protected me from all  
Uncertainty and want and weakness  
As I played in the shadows of  
Wood frame houses in need of  
Paint and repair

It reminded me always  
Of a larger world  
Outside the borders  
Of Iroquois and Cadillac  
Beyond the yellow sunrises  
Above Pennsylvania Street and  
Behind the swirling purple sunsets  
Hanging over Gratiot Avenue

# Cloud Boulevard

## East Grand Boulevard

Lined with run-down and ram-shackled centers for assisted living  
And aging mansion in various states of disrepair and dereliction  
A city street in faded glory  
Where old people sit on wide front porches  
Talking together on summer afternoons in late August  
Watching the traffic pass as they had in June  
Until the sun sets across the street  
Behind the building with a burned out roof  
And beyond the elms in full foliage  
Until they are taken in  
Still talking in low voices  
Soft as the sunset colors  
That paints the purple sky in twilight  
And fade slowly into silence  
As darkness grows

# Cloud Boulevard

## Dialog

It was sometime ago,  
Before my life became a short story  
Written by Gogol,  
That I was afraid of the dark and  
Would often sleep with the light on  
And the television playing some  
Black and white movie starring  
Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney  
Into the early hours of the morning,  
So that snip-its of the dialog  
Would drift eerily into my dreams...  
*Somehow, I have become Freddie Bartholomew*  
*And Spencer is speaking to me:*  
*"Wha you tink a dat, leetle feesh?"*

I have come to understand  
That the only way to fight fear  
Is to whole heartily embrace it,  
To make it your friend.  
Now, I love the darkness, relish its peace  
And wrap myself in it. Yes, I wear it  
Like a new Brooks Brothers suit.  
I spend the evenings sitting in the house  
With every light extinguished  
And emanating only darkness.  
When I sleep the television is off  
And it is quiet except for the dialog  
In my dreams, spoken in the little boy voice  
Of Freddie Bartholomew:  
*"Manuel, please, please don't go!"*

# Cloud Boulevard

## Lost On Sunset

I remember  
Being lost on Sunset Boulevard  
Gazing down smog shrouded streets  
At the homeless pushing shopping carts  
Filled with bulging plastic garbage bags  
Moving slowly  
Haunting and indistinct  
Their forms vanish in the haze  
Like apparitions  
Seen for a moment in sidelong glance  
Then disappear

I remember  
Reading poetry in the evening  
Under a tree hung with lanterns  
My voice awash with the noise of traffic  
Bad mufflers and clunking transmissions  
The sounds of surf on the shore  
That ebb and flow that makes  
Every day of my past  
Like so much flotsam and jetsam

I remember standing  
Haunting and indistinct  
Like an apparition  
Seen for a moment in sidelong glance  
Only to disappear  
Lost in the noise  
And neon magic  
Of Hollywood nights

# Cloud Boulevard

## Habeas Corpus

Years from now when I am gone  
And you sit at the kitchen table  
With people who never knew me  
Show them this so they will know

That I was touched and slightly  
Giddy with the silly art of poetry  
That to me was harmony and  
Melody floating everywhere

They should know too that with  
Eyes and nose and mouth and ears  
And every organ that ties us to the world  
That I love you and it grew and multiplied

Like fission in the nuclei of cells and  
Was carried in corpuscles speeding  
Through capillaries toward lips and  
Fingertips and other body parts

That celebrate a passing touch

# Cloud Boulevard

## Midnight At The ATM Machine

It greets me by name  
And asks quite to the point  
Deposit or withdrawal  
As I begin my starlight banking

To secure some cash  
A collection of crisp twenties  
That smell of ink  
On new paper and

Dead presidents  
Stare at me sternly in moonlight  
Their images engraved  
With serious rococo themes

New currency  
Being bent or crinkled  
Sounds like insects  
In the night

And bills folded tight  
Like mantis wings  
Or the torso of a katydid  
Bearing marks of the late baroque



# Cloud Boulevard

## Winter

For many minutes I sit in front of an empty page,  
While my cursor blinks  
A steady heartbeat on the screen.  
And thinking that words are  
The most inconsistent and shifting of things,  
Whimsical like the dizzy roll of waves at sea,  
Shiftless and substanceless as clouds  
That stretch across an August sky.

These days are dark and  
This is the winter of my words,  
Written across the stark whiteness  
Of a frozen field,  
Where the text stands empty  
Like a lone tree rising from a snow covered landscape  
And each line that stretches across the page  
Has the bareness of a winter branch.

## Cloud Boulevard

### All Night Party Store

The lights never go out  
At the all-night party store  
And pizza resolves nonstop  
Behind a brightly lit display  
Throughout the night and  
Early hours of the morning  
It continues to turn in  
The first light of sunrise  
That strikes the stacked  
Bottles of zinfandel on a shelf  
Setting each ablaze in peach  
And pink and that gleams against  
The mirror of the merlots  
As morning pales green and red  
Neon signs flashing in the  
Front window where the lights  
Dim in daytime but never go out

# Cloud Boulevard

## Gloria For Three Voices

1.

Oh, the road not taken,  
Torments me still, and I grow to regret  
The choices I've made  
That brought me to this sorry place  
And this sad time.

2.

Glory to you, Oh God,  
From a sparrow fallen from the sky,  
A fig tree that bears no fruit  
In this dry season, a worker  
Grumbling in the vineyard.

3.

All the Gospels somehow  
Translate for me into a single imperative  
A holy and sacrosanct admonition  
Uttered from the mouth of God:  
"Don't be an asshole."

4.

It is illusion that the forgone  
Is somehow better than the chosen  
Or some misguided poetic longing  
That makes every course of action  
Seem badly mistaken.

5.

Mercy me, Oh Lord,  
A moneychanger in the Temple,  
Selling to the devout  
A simple sacrifice of two turtledoves  
Or a few young pigeons.

## Cloud Boulevard

6.

These days are prone to confusion  
And I ponder every decision,  
Weighing every choice,  
So that free will is  
A burden I cannot bear.

7.

And I know now  
The hidden meaning of every parable,  
It is all a mystery made clear to me,  
A simple law, the divine fiat of:  
“Don’t be a dumbfuck.”

8.

Wisdom is a condition of the heart,  
That carries us straightway to God  
And lifts up our most heartfelt prayers  
With the feather-light swiftness  
Of sparrow wings.

9.

Raise me up like your friend Lazarus,  
Let me walk into a new sunlight,  
Shielding my eyes with one hand  
And tearing off all the wrappings of the tomb  
With the other.

# Cloud Boulevard

## Muse Road

Flocks of geese  
Gathering  
Near the curb  
Elegant  
And quietly feeding

There are no  
Picnickers  
Only old men  
Loitering  
Around wooden tables

A canal runs  
Parallel  
Its water still  
Unmoving  
Like the road

Near the curb  
Elegant  
And quietly feeding  
Flocks of geese  
Gathering

# Cloud Boulevard

## Along The Clinton River

I walk through the woods  
On a path along the river.  
When the sky is overcast and  
The river water just slightly  
More deeply stained, somewhere  
Between the color of strong tea  
And weak coffee.

It is a time when the legion of  
Inner voices fall silent,  
And for a moment among the  
Sycamores and oaks  
That have lost most of their foliage,  
I too stand naked, without  
The distractions of pretense.

My footsteps fall into a pace  
That is no more than a slow meander,  
And sometime I stop to watch  
The feather light and spiraled flight  
Of autumn leaves as they fall  
Or the swirls and whispering sighs of currents  
That texture the river's surface.

# Cloud Boulevard

## Ode To Bermuda Street

It is an ordinary street that stretches out  
Quite unremarkably like any other  
Sunny and open on summer days  
It seems to capture light  
Fully bright and unobstructed by trees  
In the last long afternoons of August

Where twilight colors in early evening  
Paint the white siding of low frame homes  
In sunsets cut by high voltage power lines  
That divides the sky and span the horizon  
Hanging over large dirt lots  
Where construction equipment is parked

In an age of unheroic verse it seems fitting  
Somehow to elevate and lift up this landscape  
Of modest homes and weed grown yards  
To lofty reaches that celebrate and mark  
The golden light that falls so richly  
On Bermuda Street in late August

# Cloud Boulevard

## A Study In Form

I have mastered the art of approach  
The dance of improvisational movement  
Around a subject  
Like the low brick facades on Main Street  
Articulated by second storey windows

The movement of muscle  
Sinew and bone  
An expression of torso and limbs  
My body bent into a word  
Moving in a phrase  
My breath upon a line of verse  
Of what is and why  
Toward what could be and is

This is the art of pose and stance  
Rhythm and tempo  
For I have mastered the approach  
And am a channel for burning forces  
That bubble up in blood vessels and brain  
In nerve endings and spine  
Twisted in all the expressions of form  
All the permutations of shape



# Cloud Boulevard

## On The Right Side of God

At the Second Baptist Church  
Black angels in stained-glass windows  
Guard the front entrance

And I think that God so loves diversity  
That Cherubim of color  
Wearing golden garb

Sing Gospel that makes the Saints  
Slap their sacred knees  
And I know that Seraphim sing the

Blues so plaintive and compelling that  
Bare feet that bear the wounds of nails  
Tap the holy floors of heaven

In perfect time with the rhythm  
And every Saint and Martyr sways  
On the right side of God

# Cloud Boulevard

## Cloud Boulevard

### *A Tribute To Hazelton*

In Pennsylvania coal country,  
Near the Pocono's,  
Where far horizons rise to the sky,  
I know that today the town of Hazelton  
Is oddly still in the sunlight  
Like a cat sitting on the window sill,  
And Cloud Boulevard stretches greenly lush  
With long lawns that lay before tall wood frame homes,  
And it seems to me  
That time advances with a lazy reluctance  
On afternoons such as this in mid-May.

I have come to walk on Cloud Boulevard  
And to remember my life here as a stranger,  
A life lived  
At what now seems a great distance away  
From this coolness in the air  
That I now breathe so deeply, and I stroll  
Slowly to the East so that the late afternoon sun  
Casts my long shadow on the sidewalk  
And I pass down this street like a ghost,  
Not so much as darkness, but rather,  
More as an absence of light.

# Cloud Boulevard

## Downtown Indianapolis

Downtown Indianapolis is largely  
Empty and uninspiring as a cornfield  
In late November and I am here  
As a witness to the wind rattling a reed  
In the wilderness a trembling sound  
That seems to find a way  
To my ears alone

The parking lots are empty in evenings  
Like Spring fields plowed with  
Rows of furrows and I am here  
As a testament to marble and bronze  
Statues that stand still and mute  
Like scarecrows in cool brightness  
On April mornings

The government buildings are capped  
Like domed silos that rise above  
Asphalt and brick below and I am here  
To document the dim dullness  
And dark dumbness of a wind  
That winds down Illinois Avenue  
Lifting dust from the furrows  
In a cornfield with lights

# Cloud Boulevard

For Mildred Flynn

The wife now widow  
Of many sailors  
Laid to rest long ago

Who walked with me  
Across summer afternoons  
I was like a child with her

A boy who touched her hand  
And followed wherever  
She led me and I wonder

If she simply saw what I needed  
Or was it I that saw what she  
Most fervently wished for

In days like peacock feathers  
And orange turbans  
Where need meets want and

Sadness grasps melancholy  
And leaves me now the sole holder  
Of promises unkept

# Cloud Boulevard

## Postmodernist Suite

1.

I met my father  
Walking down Russell Street,  
Somewhere along the line of low storefronts  
Between Gabriel Brothers Imports  
And The Rocky Peanut Company.

2.

The gothic spires of St. Joseph's,  
Green with weathered bronze,  
Stand against the sunrise  
That is a nimbus of glowing blue light  
Hanging over the far east side.

3.

In this old section of the city  
Steam is exhausted through  
Manhole covers in the street  
That billow thick gray clouds  
On winter mornings.

4.

He is wearing the same wrinkled pants  
He always did, and he had not shaved in several days.  
When I embrace him and hold him close  
He smells of cigarettes and clothes  
Worn for too many days.

5.

Amid the rooftop ornaments  
And gothic stubble there is a lone cross  
Bent slightly to the south,  
That has leaned in that direction  
For as long as I remember.

6.

It seems fitting that these desolate  
And deserted streets should expel  
Smoke in eerie fashion  
As a warning to the fainthearted  
And casual pedestrian

## Cloud Boulevard

7.

The stones of each arch and buttress,  
Blackened by soot, rise graceful  
Above low red brick structures surrounding it  
And seems to belong more to the skyline  
Than to the landscape.

8.

I stand squarely on the iron grating as the steam envelopes me,  
And transforms me, ghost-like,  
Into a phantom of these streets,  
An angry urban spirit that does not want to scare you,  
But kick your ass if not beat you to death.

9.

I start to chide him  
For never calling or stopping by,  
And when I ask him:  
*"Where the hell have you been for so long?"*  
He smiles impishly and replies: *"Dead."*

# Cloud Boulevard

## Ode To Mohawk Avenue

On Mohawk Avenue oaks and elms grow tall  
And shade the street in dim twilight  
On the brightest afternoons of August  
When sunlight burns white and hot  
I stop for long whiles to watch the play  
Of light and darkness in the topmost limbs  
And on the asphalt of the road  
Where the blacktop itself becomes like tree bark

The street is empty of people and cars  
And is mostly silent and still except for  
The wind rustling leaves high in the canopies  
And animating the interplay of sunlight and shade  
On the roofs of houses that line the street  
And lay quite in the coolness like dogs  
Sleeping in the shadows  
In the waning days of summer

On Mohawk Avenue the oaks and elms  
Grow tall and straight like classical columns  
In a colonnade of mixed orders  
Holding up the temple pediment of summer sky  
And I must decide in each case  
By the shape and girth of its trunk  
If one tree is more Ionic than Doric  
In the architecture of an August afternoon

# Cloud Boulevard

## My Own Scotland

She will call me Doo-glass  
And sit under a tree and  
Talk to me

As I fish for trout in the  
River Clyde along a tree  
Lined bank

She speaks from beneath  
A straw hat with wide brim  
Face hidden

I stand in the water casting  
Into the sun's gilded surface  
Again again

Her words carried on the  
River sounds to me standing  
In the current

The water cool and forceful  
Against my calves and I  
Question her

Beneath her straw hat  
Her face enshadowed I ask  
Her of

Heraclitus and if this is not  
The same river from  
Minutes ago

Am I a new man for standing  
In this changed and different  
River Clyde

She will call me Doo-glass  
Lifting the brim of her hat to  
Show her smile



# Cloud Boulevard

## Pen & Ink

There is a bronze bench on Main Street  
Near North Fourth  
Between two trees and shaded in shadows  
Beneath a lushness of foliage

On Saturday mornings in mid-summer  
A man sits on the bench with a book  
Spread open across his lap and  
Picks up a pen to write

He wears worn shoes without socks  
Khaki shorts with an old t-shirt  
And is unshaven as he sips coffee  
From a cardboard cup and studies

The quality of light on the west side  
And shapes drawn by shade  
And shadow on the east as  
He scratches an unshaved chin

The morning is without breeze and the  
The trees along Main Street stand still  
As if painted against the sky  
Or sculpted in green stone

He looks down the center lane  
That divides light and darkness  
And writes across the pages  
Spread open on his lap

And looks toward the sunlit façade  
Of the bank across the street  
The foliage on Corinthian capitals  
Still and unmoving as the trees

Column rising slender to lift a pediment  
And raise a cornice that forms a pattern  
Of black and white against the watercolor  
Wash that is the western sky

The man unshaven and wearing worn shoes  
Puts down his pen

# Cloud Boulevard

## Eastern Market

This morning  
We watched a flower vendor  
Line up rows of potted tulips  
Some opened and some still closed  
The petals delicate pastels  
In varying shades of yellow and orange  
The neat lines of blossoms  
Arranged by color  
Like a Van Gogh landscape  
Of tulip fields in Holland

We stop to admire calla lilies  
Some yellow and some white  
Set out in large pots on the pavement  
I touch one with the delicate care of curator  
Handling some rare or fragile artifact  
And I recall a kneeling nude by Rivera  
Her body surrounded by blossoms  
And it seems to me now in recollection  
That she was more the flower  
A bud unfolding in the sun  
Half opened and half closed

And I write this as a record  
So that when today fades in memory  
Into a foggy graininess of black and white  
As images slip into the grayscale of time past  
And the fragrance of flowers is swept away  
In spring winds and forgotten  
Read these words to remind you  
That we walked today through peddler's stalls  
Filled with all the colors of an painter's palette  
And touched blossoms so fine and perfect  
They must have been crafted not grown  
In a studio not a garden

# Cloud Boulevard

## Like the Birds

*For Terra*

And I must tell you now  
For you should know that  
Memories return to me now  
And pass through consciousness  
Like flocks of starlings  
That mass together in large numbers  
And fly across the skies in late August  
Patterned and syncopated  
In choreographed formations  
And sometimes too they come  
Alone and solitary  
Like a lone gold finch perched  
Upon a farthest extremity  
Of a pine branch  
Held aloft in sacred benediction  
In holy elevation  
To celebrate a moment  
And capture  
As this poem for you  
Feelings that fly aerial acrobatics  
And sing unbounded joy

# Cloud Boulevard

## About Doug Tanoury



Doug Tanoury is primarily a poet of the Internet with the majority of his work never leaving electronic form. His verse can be read at electronic magazines and journals across the world. Collections of poetry by Doug Tanoury can be found at Funky Dog Publishing

<http://www.funkydogpublishing.com> and Athens Avenue

<http://mywebpages.comcast.net/dtanoury1/Athens/index.htm>

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Doug grew up in Detroit, Michigan and still lives in the area.

Doug Tanoury credits his 7th grade poetry anthology from Sister Debra's English class, Reflections On A Gift Of Watermelon Pickle And Other Modern Verse, (Stephen Dunning, Edward Lueders and Hugh Smith, (c) 1966 by Scott Foresman & Company) as exerting the greatest influence on his work. He still keeps a copy of it at his writing desk.